

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS EN ROUTE TO BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.
JULY 17, 1994

SECRETARY PERRY: Let's just have a short discussion of what the trip's going to be all about. This is a, I guess you can call it, basically a fact-finding trip, and as you know, I'll be meeting with ministers of defense and other foreign officials in a number of the Balkan countries, a number of southern tier countries of NATO -- Italy, Greece, Turkey as well as going into Sarajevo and visiting our troops in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

One of the objectives of the trip is to seek out the opinions of these government officials on issues of common interest to the United States, for example, the current problems in Bosnia. It would by no means be limited to that, but that would be one of the focuses of our discussion. Another thing I want to do is establish relationships with those defense ministers that I have not yet met. I find it very important when we have problems coming up in the world to be able to get on the phone and talk directly with somebody I've already met and know. I will be solidifying relationships with the defense ministers I've already met -- about half of them have already come to the United States and I met them there.

Some of you may remember Minister Tinca of Romania who visited the United States about a month ago. When he was here it was just as the World Cup games were starting and I unwisely bet with Minister Tinca on the American team over the Romanian team. I bet him a bottle of California wine against a bottle of Romanian wine.

PRESS COMMENT: You may be happy you lost the bet. (Laughter)

SECRETARY PERRY: I'm carrying along with me a little packet of three different varieties of California wine which I will present to Minister Tinca as a payment of this debt.

I'm going to back off a little bit on why the emphasis on the Balkans relatively early in my time as Secretary before I've made, for example, substantial visits to Germany and United Kingdom and France and so on. It's because we see the Bosnia problem, for one thing, at the center -- not only at the center of what's going on in the Balkans today, but symptomatic of the kind of problems that could occur on a wider basis.

I have said numerous times in my speeches and interviews that I believe our primary national security interest in Bosnia is preventing the widening of that war -- preventing the spread of the war. The place it would spread to are the countries we're going to be visiting, the other Balkan countries around the border of Bosnia. Since that is our main national security interest, and since it is influenced not only by what happens in Bosnia but what happens in these neighboring countries, it's very important to have a security understanding with these countries. So that will be a major part of our discussion.

Our other interest in Bosnia, of course, is humanitarian assistance which we provide through a variety of means. Obviously, we could serve both those interests, preventing the widening of the war and the humanitarian if we could get a peace treaty in Bosnia. We will be in the Balkans in a very significant week because the Parliaments in both Bosnia and the South formed assembly of Bosnian Serbs are going to be voting on the peace plan early this week, probably tomorrow. The contact group is going to be meeting again on Wednesday. All of this is going to be happening while we're traveling around these countries. By the time we get to Sarajevo presumably we will have an answer on what the next course on this peace plan is.

The discussions I'll be having with the Balkan countries will by no means be limited to Bosnia, though. We're looking to find ways to anchor the Balkans in the broad European security system, the Western security system. There are at least two different ways that we're pursuing that.

The first thing you're already familiar with is the Partnership for Peace. These countries are enthusiastically -- the three Balkan countries we'll be visiting with that are members of the Partnership for Peace, are enthusiastic and vigorous members. I'll talk more when we get to Bulgaria about some of the particular activities they have there. We will be discussing with them the joint training, the very interesting exercise being planned by Bulgaria. We have bilateral relations, military to military relations, developing with these countries so we will be deepening and strengthening those relationships as well.

Finally, I'm going to be in Sarajevo. I will be meeting with General Rose as well as some of the Bosnian government officials. That discussion will be focused -- that will be after we know what happened with the peace plan -- and it will be focused on questions, for example, if we're going forward with the peace plan, how will the NATO forces relate to and interact with the UNPROFOR that's already there? How do you transition from one to the other? That's probably enough for introductory comments.

Q. Let's kind of get Romania out of the way first. Do you plan on carrying any package of aid to Romania? Do you plan any concrete moves, any agreements, anything -- can you tell us about joint maneuvers that are coming up with the Romanians? They're not in as bad financial shape as a country like Albania is, but are you planning on carrying any money for them?

A. No we're not.

Q. (inaudible) concretely. Can you give us some detail.

A. We're discussing their joint exercises and we'll be discussing also with the Romanians -- there's three or four issues we've talked about with them in a bilateral way that involve joint training, that involve military equipment, not tanks and aircraft carriers, but routine military equipment. These are not major issues at all and that's not the reason for the trip.

Q. What kind of joint exercises? Is this through the Partnership for Peace Program?

A. Yes. We have been discussing exercises, both bilateral and Partnership for Peace, but our objective is to try to get these into the Partnership for Peace framework because we began these bilateral working relationships before the Partnership for Peace was formed.

Q. Are there any concrete plans? Could you give us anything more on possible joint maneuvers, joint...

A. When we're going to Bulgaria, I will want to describe in some detail the exercises being planned there. That involves what five countries, Joe?

DR. KRUZEL: Yes.

SECRETARY PERRY: Five members -- Bulgaria, United States, Turkey, and Greece are the ones that stick in my mind now.

DR. KRUZEL: Ukraine.

SECRETARY PERRY: What's interesting there is the variety of countries that are represented in an exercise together.

Q. When would those possibly be?

A. Early next year would be my best guess. Do you have a better guess on that, Joe?

DR. KRUZEL: There is an exercise already planned for next month called Breeze 94. It's under the auspices of Partnership for Peace but we'll be discussing other -- that's a naval exercise.

SECRETARY PERRY: That does not have a date yet set for it, does it?

DR. KRUZEL: Yes, sir. Bulgaria is the one that organized this exercise, Breeze 94. But in addition to this already planned naval exercise, we'll be exploring other possibilities for next year.

Q. You're talking about more land type?

A. Yes.

Q. The peace proposal that's now pending. My understanding is if it works, we are still committed to 25,000 or so troops, and if they don't reach agreement that we would expand the safe havens. Does that mean that one way or the other, we're going to be seeing a more activist posture by the United States regardless of what happens?

A. I think that the fundamental conclusion is that we're at a fork in the road here. We're going to go one way or the other down that fork. I don't quite sign up to the particular description of the forks you made. It's not clear that we're going to need 25,000 troops. That 25,000 number dates back to an earlier peace plan that had very different boundaries associated with it. You have to tie the number to the actual peace plan that's agreed upon.

Yes, on the one hand, if the peace plan is agreed upon, then we would propose to put -- form a NATO force which would have a significant number of U.S. troops -- fewer than 25,000, I believe. The alternative to that, you have read the statements we have made to both the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs, of the conditions if they do not accept the peace plan. That's assuming it's an either/or situation. You can certainly imagine the situation where there's some sort of a third choice is at least proposed to the contact group. And then the contact group at the meeting on Wednesday will have to decide whether to consider a choice. They have made it a stark yes or no. So we either get a "yes," or "no's," or we'll get some sort of "yes, but..." The contact group on Wednesday -- we may have that issue to decide.

Q. You mean give them more time, possibly extend the deadline if things look promising?

A. I don't know what the proposal might be. But it might be something -- not a clean "yes." If that happens, then that's something the contact group will have to determine whether it's worth considering. The contact group's proposal was not asking for a negotiation. It was asking for a "yes" or a "no."

Q. How do things look right now? Are you confident or is it just difficult to tell?

A. To the contact group?

Q. What the Serbs (inaudible)

A. I'd be pretty rash to try to predict what the Serb assembly is going to do on this. I read people estimating that, but they're just speculating. I don't know what they're going to do. They have both sides stated that they don't like the plan. I think I mentioned to you once before that's probably the best situation you can hope for. That means that the contact group got the plan about right if both sides don't like it.

Q. You said a few minutes ago that the main interest in Bosnia at this point is preventing the war from spreading. If this plan is rejected, does that mean that there will be a major shift on the part of the contact group away from trying to settle this conflict and toward, or more toward, a strategy of just containing it?

A. Try that again.

Q. If this peace plan is not accepted for whatever reason, does that mean the United States and the other members give up on trying to settle this conflict or at least back away from that goal and more toward a goal of just keeping it from spreading?

A. There's a big uncertainty between the situation you pose and the outcome you're trying to project and that is what happens to UNPROFOR because the threats to more broadly -- to expand these safe haven zones and the threat to lift embargoes which are contained in the contact group statement. If those were to happen, then it's entirely possible for some of the nations that are in UNPROFOR would decide to pull out. If UNPROFOR pulls out, then it's an entirely different ball game because up until then you've been trying to bring about a peace and minimize casualties while you're doing it. But if UNPROFOR pulls out, the vehicle for minimizing the casualties is going to disappear.

So the danger then is that a much more intense war will get underway. And simply because it's more intense, it could tend to spread -- there's a greater danger of spreading. And because different nations are now providing arms to both sides, that increases the danger of spreading, too. So I would say by way of getting back to the question you asked, the danger of the war spreading becomes greater in that case and therefore, the objective of keeping that from happening has to be increased in priority.

Q. This is somewhat of a hypothetical question, but given the situation, where do you see the potential for spreading to the Krajina, into Macedonia? What are the soft spots that could make this domino fall back on itself again?

A. It could spread in essentially both directions. It could spread to the Krajina which remains a troubled area today. It's a nexus between the Croats on the one hand and the Bosnian Serbs on the other hand, the Bosnian Muslims on the other. There are even, in that area, there are two different factions of the Muslims, so-called rebel factions of the Muslims in there, too. That's obviously a troubled area and as that spreads, it spreads the word more extensively in Croatia.

The other direction, you're looking at a southern tier of countries -- Albania, the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria. That southern tier, you almost have to look at as a package and figure on it spreading down in that direction. Not mentioned there, but adjacent to those countries is Kosovo, which is not an independent nation but it's also a trouble spot. All of those countries have a minority which have in the past been sources of trouble and could be sources of trouble in the future. So it could go either way. We look at this southern tier of countries, Albania, FYROM and Bulgaria, and we see -- we almost have to look at them as a group, a grouping. (inaudible) what they can do to minimize a dangerous threat.

Q. I think we would be remiss if we didn't ask you about Haiti. What is it look like? Is there any indication that the senior military might be preparing to go -- have they sent us any signals at all that they might be considering...

A. All of the signals that I have seen of that type are ambiguous. I wouldn't place much credence in them.

Q. When is the invasion?

Q. How are your ambiguous signals going? (Laughter)

A. You wouldn't want me to tell you that.

Let me make a serious statement about that which is, the President truly has not decided, determined that there would be an invasion. Therefore, the question, what is the date of the invasion is a non-sequitor because he hasn't made that determination yet.

Q. Is he drawing closer to such a decision? Do you see the United States drawing closer to such a decision?

A. I see it proceeding it farther along in the sanctions program and when we started this new level of sanctions, the President said let's give it some time to see if it works, well we're in the process of doing that now. We're giving it that time. We still have -- there's still certainly some period of time to go before you have a full assessment of what the effect of the sanctions are going to be.

Q. I'd like to return to my earlier question and make sure that I understood your answer. Is it indeed likely that there'll be not necessarily expanded American forces but an expanded American responsibility regardless of which way the peace agreement goes either to help enforce the peace or to more aggressively protect those safe havens and expand? You talk about a fork in the road. Do both forks lead to expanded American responsibility?

A. I think if we go down either one of those two forks we laid out, that it would be an expanded role for NATO and the United States would be an important part of that. In the case of the peace plan, a very much bigger role for the United States. In the case of the other fork, the role would not be that much bigger. There's always a possibility of a third fork. It's hard to estimate what it would be in that case. That's why it affects the answer a little bit.

Q. Is there some kind of delay in the outcome?

A. I'm simply saying that the contact group has asked for a yes or no answer. If they get a yes or no answer, then on Wednesday the contact group will meet and we'll know what to do. They've already laid out the prescription of what to do. Life may not be that simple. They may be get a qualified yes and then they'll have to meet and worry about is this qualification something worth considering.

Q. I just wanted one check on North Korea if you see because of this delay in the funeral if you see any indications of any trouble there or a power struggle?

A. I've read the speculations that the delay in the funeral means a power struggle. I think those are speculations. I haven't seen hard evidence to support that.

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Pg. 4

'Fork in the road' on Bosnia

By Steve Komarow
USA TODAY

Defense Secretary William Perry says the U.S. faces an expanded military role in Bosnia-Herzegovina if the warring factions accept a peace settlement — or if they don't.

Perry says the civil war in the former Yugoslavia is "at a fork in the road":

► In one direction is peace, if both sides agree to accept a new map dividing Bosnia between the Muslim-led government and Bosnian Serbs. Both face a Tuesday deadline to accept or reject the proposal.

► In the other direction is war, which, if unchecked, could spread through the Balkans and threaten regional stability.

"I think if we go down either one of those two forks, that there would be an

expanded road for NATO and the United States would be an important part of that," says Perry, who spoke to reporters en route to Romania. It's the first step in a week of meetings with Eastern European leaders.

He plans to visit the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo on Friday and meet there with British Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, the commander of U.N. forces in the country.

Rose says U.N. forces are not capable of enforcing a peace plan if the Bosnian Serbs resist.

"I don't think we can do an awful lot more enforcement than we're doing at the moment without restructuring ourselves and somebody else coming in,"

presumably NATO.

Perry says the United States would contribute ground forces to an international peacekeeping effort in Bosnia, should the peace agreement be accepted: "We would propose to form a NATO force that would have a significant number of NATO troops."

Perry declines to give a specific number. Under an earlier peace plan, the U.S. share was 25,000.

Currently, the United States' primary role in containing the civil war is air power. U.S. jets, as part of a NATO force, have been enforcing a no-fly zone

over the country.

The United States also has about 500 troops in nearby Macedonia, keeping watch that the fighting doesn't spread from Bosnia.

If the latest peace plan is rejected, a distinct possibility, Perry says current efforts to keep a damper on the civil war could be jeopardized.

A "big uncertainty exists whether the major nations that comprise the U.N. protection force in Bosnia, France, Britain and Canada, will opt to remain

there," he says.

In addition to Romania, Perry is visiting Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia this week.

"The Bosnia problem is not only the center of what is going on in the Balkans today, but is also symptomatic of the kinds of problems that could occur on a wider basis," Perry says. Preventing the Bosnian war from spreading is a "primary national security interest" to the United States, he says.

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Perry sees U.S. role widening in Bosnia

By Susanne M. Schafer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUCHAREST, Romania — The United States will put "a significant number" of its forces on the ground in Bosnia should warring factions there decide this week to accept an international peace plan, Defense Secretary William Perry said yesterday.

But even if the peace plan isn't accepted, the United States may have to shoulder expanded military responsibilities in the region if the two-year war flares anew and spreads in several directions, Mr. Perry warned.

"I think there's a fundamental

conclusion that we are at a fork in the road here," he said when asked about options for future U.S. involvement in the region.

Mr. Perry spoke with reporters en route to a weeklong visit to several Balkan hot spots, including Sarajevo and Macedonia, where about 500 U.S. troops are stationed to avert a widening of the conflict.

He said his visit comes during a very significant week, when both the Bosnian parliament and the assembly of Bosnian Serbs are scheduled to say yes or no to the plan.

Mr. Perry is slated to meet Friday in Sarajevo with Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia. He said they will take stock of "what the next course ... on this peace plan is."

If the plan is accepted, the defense chief said, "we would propose to form a NATO force that would have a significant number of NATO troops."

Mr. Perry declined to specify a figure. But a senior Pentagon official traveling with Mr. Perry said a U.S. division — which would range in size from 15,000 to 20,000 troops — would be needed to monitor the peace agreement.

The U.S. contingent would make up about half the NATO force, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

If the peace plan isn't accepted, Bosnia's Muslim-led government could be exempted from a U.S. arms embargo. There also have been discussions of expanding NATO's enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia and the policing of heavy-weapons bans in newly extended safety zones.

"I think if we go down either one of those two forks that we laid out, that there would be an expanded road for NATO and the United States would be an important part of that," Mr. Perry said.

The majority of allied warplanes enforcing the no-fly zone are U.S. aircraft flying from bases in Italy.

Mr. Perry also warned that if the peace plan is rejected, a "big uncertainty exists whether the major nations that comprise the U.N. protection force in Bosnia — France, Britain and Canada — will opt to remain there."

The defense secretary's visits to Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia are intended to offer him a firsthand look at the Balkans' security problems.